

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1 1. A communications network comprising a central unit, a first peripheral unit,
 2 and a second peripheral unit; the central unit being connected by a first link to the first
 3 peripheral unit and by a second link to the second peripheral unit, the communications
 4 network further comprising:

5 means for providing a radio link between the first peripheral unit and the second
 6 peripheral unit;

7 means for providing communication between the central unit and the second
 8 peripheral unit over the radio link upon failure of the second link.

1 2. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the means for providing communication
 2 reroutes traffic carried over the second link to the radio link and the first link.

3 3. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the means for providing communication
 4 provides control information concerning one of the second link and the second
 5 peripheral unit to the radio link and the first link.

6 4. The apparatus of claim 3, wherein the means for providing communication
 7 provides fault localization information concerning failure of the second link to the radio
 8 link and the first link.

1 5. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein one of (1) the central unit, and (2) the first
 2 peripheral unit determine whether traffic and/or control information is to be rerouted
 3 from the second link to the first link.

4 6. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the central unit, the first peripheral unit,
 5 and the second peripheral unit are each nodes of the communications network.

6 7. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the communications network is a radio
 7 access telecommunications network, wherein the central unit is a radio network control
 8 (RNC) node; wherein the first peripheral unit is a first base station; and wherein the
 second peripheral unit is a second base station.

1 8. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the central unit, the first peripheral unit,
2 and the second peripheral unit comprise portions of a distributed radio base station node
3 of a radio access telecommunications network.

1 9. The apparatus of claim 8, wherein the central unit comprises data processing
2 and control functions of the distributed radio base station node, and wherein at least one
3 of the first peripheral unit and the second peripheral unit comprises a transceiver of the
4 distributed radio base station node.

1 10. A communications network comprising:
2 a central unit;
3 a first peripheral unit;
4 a second peripheral unit;
5 a first link which connects the central unit to the first peripheral unit;
6 a second link which connects the central unit to the second peripheral unit,
7 a radio link connecting the first peripheral unit and the second peripheral unit;
8 wherein communication occurs between the central unit and the second
9 peripheral unit over the radio link upon failure of the second link.

1 11. The apparatus of claim 10, wherein rerouting of traffic carried over the
2 second link to the radio link and the first link occurs upon failure of the second link.

1 12. The apparatus of claim 10, wherein control information concerning one of
2 the second link and the second peripheral unit is carried over the second link to the
3 radio link and the first link occurs upon failure of the second link.

1 13. The apparatus of claim 10, wherein the control information is fault
2 localization information concerning failure of the second link.

1 14. The apparatus of claim 10, wherein one of (1) the central unit, and (2) the
2 first peripheral unit determine whether traffic and/or control information is to be
3 rerouted from the second link to the first link.

1 15. The apparatus of claim 10, wherein the central unit, the first peripheral unit,
2 and the second peripheral unit are each nodes of the communications network.

1 16. The apparatus of claim 15, wherein the communications network is a radio
2 access telecommunications network, wherein the central unit is a radio network control
3 (RNC) node; wherein the first peripheral unit is a first base station; and wherein the
4 second peripheral unit is a second base station.

1 17. The apparatus of claim 10, wherein the central unit, the first peripheral unit,
2 and the second peripheral unit comprise portions of a distributed radio base station node
3 of a radio access telecommunications network.

1 18. The apparatus of claim 17, wherein the central unit comprises data
2 processing and control functions of the distributed radio base station node, and wherein
3 at least one of the first peripheral unit and the second peripheral unit comprises a
4 transceiver of the distributed radio base station node.

1 19. A peripheral unit for use in a communications network which also includes
2 a central unit and another peripheral unit, the central unit being connected by a first link
3 to the another peripheral unit and by a second link to the peripheral unit, the peripheral
4 unit comprising means for communicating with the central unit over a radio link upon
5 failure of the second link, the radio link being established between the peripheral unit
6 and the another peripheral unit.

1 20. The apparatus of claim 19, wherein the means for communicating reroutes
2 traffic carried over the second link to the radio link and the first link.

1 21. The apparatus of claim 19, wherein the means for communicating provides
2 control information concerning one of the second link and the peripheral unit to the
3 radio link and the first link.

1 22. The apparatus of claim 21, wherein the means for communicating provides
2 fault localization information concerning failure of the second link to the radio link and
3 the first link.

1 23. The apparatus of claim 19, wherein the peripheral unit is a base station of a
2 radio access telecommunications network.

1 24. The apparatus of claim 19, wherein the central unit, the first peripheral unit,
2 and the second peripheral unit comprise portions of a distributed radio base station node
3 of a radio access telecommunications network.

1 25. The apparatus of claim 24, wherein the central unit comprises data
2 processing and control functions of the distributed radio base station node, and wherein
3 at least one of the first peripheral unit and the second peripheral unit comprises a
4 transceiver of the distributed radio base station node.

1 26. For use in a communications network comprising a central unit, a first
2 peripheral unit, and a second peripheral unit; the central unit being connected by a first
3 link to the first peripheral unit and by a second link to the second peripheral unit, a
4 method comprising:

5 providing communication between the central unit and the second peripheral unit
6 over a radio link upon failure of the second link, the radio link extending between the
7 first peripheral unit and the second peripheral unit.

1 27. The method of claim 26, wherein the step of providing communication
2 comprises rerouting traffic carried over the second link to the radio link and the first
3 link.

1 28. The method of claim 26, wherein the step of providing communication
2 comprises providing control information concerning one of the second link and the
3 second peripheral unit to the radio link and the first link.

1 29. The method of claim 28, wherein the step of providing control information
2 comprises providing fault localization information concerning failure of the second link
3 to the radio link and the first link.

1 30. The method of claim 26, wherein the central unit, the first peripheral unit,
2 and the second peripheral unit are each nodes of the communications network.

1 31. The method of claim 30, wherein the communications network is a radio
2 access telecommunications network, wherein the central unit is a radio network control

3 (RNC) node; wherein the first peripheral unit is a first base station; and wherein the
4 second peripheral unit is a second base station.

1 32. The method of claim 26, wherein the central unit, the first peripheral unit,
2 and the second peripheral unit comprise portions of a distributed radio base station node
3 of a radio access telecommunications network.

1 33. The method of claim 32, wherein the central unit comprises data processing
2 and control functions of the distributed radio base station node, and wherein at least one
3 of the first peripheral unit and the second peripheral unit comprises a transceiver of the
4 distributed radio base station node.

1 34. The method of claim 26, further comprising the central unit determining
2 whether traffic and/or control information is to be rerouted from the second link to the
3 first link.

1 35. The method of claim 26, further comprising the first peripheral unit
2 determining whether traffic and/or control information is to be rerouted from the second
3 link to the first link.